NINE-STEP WALK AND TURN

This field sobriety exercise is designed to test both an individuals cognitive and physical abilities. The suspect is supposed to be taken to a straight line on an even, dry surface free from interference and debris. In practice, the officer might bring you off to the side and tell you to imagine a line. You are told to stand at the beginning of the line, one foot in front of the other, heel to toe. You will be told not to start the test until told to do so. The officer will tell you to take nine steps out, counting out loud, stepping heel to toe, keeping your arms down at your side. After 9 steps out, you will turn (as he will demonstrate), and take nine steps back counting out loud.

According to the NHSTA standards, there are eight cues of impairment:

1. Loss of balance during instruction
2. Starting test before told to do so
3. Stops during performance of test to steady self
4. Fails to touch heel to toe
5. Steps off of line
6. Uses arms for balance (above 6 inches)
7. Loses balance or turns improperly
8. Takes the wrong number of steps

If a suspect demonstrates two of these eight cues during the performance of this test, there is a 68% probability the suspect is under the influence of alcohol and has a BAC of .10 or more.

ONE LEG STAND TEST

The one leg stand test is also designed to test the suspect’s cognitive and physical abilities. The officer will tell the suspect to stand feet together, perfectly still with his hands down at his side. He is told not to start the test until he is told.

According to NHSTA standards, the suspect will stand with one foot, 6 inches off the ground, counting out loud until told to stop. The suspect is told to keep his arms down and not raise them for balance. The officer is trained to look for the following cues:

1. Swaying while balancing
2. Using arms for balance
3. Hopping to maintain balance

Putting foot down before completion of test. If an officer observes two or more of the above cues, there is a 65% probability that the suspect has a blood alcohol content of .10.